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To: House Human Services Committee
From: Joy Bruck, State President, AARP Montana
Re: Opposition to SJ 9

Both the assumptions and the statistics in this resolution are puzzling. Overall the Affordable Care Act has been beneficial to seniors. Let me give you a few examples:

*The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services says more than 7 million Medicare beneficiaries have saved almost \$9 billion in prescription drug costs since 2010 when the ACA began helping seniors and adults with disabilities enrolled in Medicare pay these prescription drug costs. They note that this has saved an average of \$1209.00 per person. We predict more savings in the future.

*The Medicare Trustees projected the trust fund financing Medicare's hospital insurance coverage will remain solvent until 2030. This is four years beyond what was projected just a year ago. Due in part to cost controls implemented in the ACA, per capita spending is projected to grow at a slower rate than the overall economy for the next several years, (from a CMS Trustee Press Release)

*The ACA law shifts Medicare's focus to helping seniors stay healthy. Now Medicare covers yearly wellness visits, more preventive care including screenings for cancer, diabetes, cholesterol levels, immunizations and education on diet and exercise.

There are also some things we'd like you to know about Medicare Advantage Plans;

*AARP supported the reduction of excess payments to insurance companies to hold down premium increases to those in traditional Medicare. Prior to the ACA, MA insurers were receiving an average 114% of what traditional Medicare paid for the same services. Even with these reductions, MA plans still receive 106%. Changes in MA payments are designed to reduce the disparity over several years.

*The Medicaid Advantage program has continued to grow since enactment of the ACA. Even with the payment reductions, 99% of beneficiaries nationwide will continue to have access to one or more MA plans.

Finally, AARP is concerned that directing Congress to use funds intended for Medicaid expansion could prevent our legislature from helping the 70,000 hard-working Montanans from getting health coverage, including the 13,487 50 to 64 year olds, who at this stage of life could be one health crisis away from a financial situation that could lead to medical bankruptcy; or to help our economy, job market, and our hospitals, who incur nearly \$400 million in uncompensated care.

AARP sees no reason for this resolution and we urge a no vote.

Real Possibilities